Mark Finley and Health Initiatives Bring Baptisms to General Conference Session
In an impactful display of commitment and readiness to serve, eleven individuals were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church family Friday evening in the San Antonio Alamodome, officiated by Evangelist Mark Finley.

The General Conference (GC) Session on Friday evening, July 3, welcomed Mark Finley, assistant to the president of the GC, who spoke on the importance of evangelism. “Why evangelism?,” Finley asked repeatedly. “The biggest thing in God’s mind, on God’s heart, His biggest priority,” he said, “is winning lost people.” Appealing for the Church to join the action, Finley described witnessing as “a spiritual vitamin that revitalizes our spiritual lives.” Reaching out in loving service to others changes our own hearts, he emphasized.

This message resonated strongly with a previous business session that afternoon, including the Secretary’s Report. In his report, G. T. Ng, the executive secretary of the GC, heralded the 6,212,919 new members who had joined in the last five years. However he also pointed out that during the same period, 3,717,683 members left the church. With a net loss rate of 60 per 100 converts, evangelism both without and within the church has become of great import.
At the end of Finley’s message, eleven individuals were introduced and their stories briefly described to the thousands gathered in the dome. Then they were baptized in a small pool of water contained in something resembling a hot tub in front of the stage.

Several women were drawn in by the Adventist-founded health initiative, Your Best Pathway to Health, held in the Alamodome in April. A woman named Louise Rice stated that she wanted to be baptized in the Alamodome because “this was where [her] hope was revived.”

Another couple, originally from Cuba, walked into a laundromat in Texas a few months ago, where their accents were recognized by an Adventist brother. After connecting, they were invited to a CREATION Health small group and made the decision to officially join the church family.

“This is what church is all about,” Finley concluded emphatically, the audience clapping in agreement, “welcoming others into our family.”

--Katie Morrison is a communication intern at the Rocky Mountain Conference